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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/934,082	08/22/2001	Nicholas Alan Timothy Colford	045636-5050	7370

9629 7590 06/25/2004

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EXAMINER

HYLTON, ROBIN ANNETTE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3727

DATE MAILED: 06/25/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/934,082	Applicant(s) COLFORD ET AL.	
	Examiner Robin A. Hylton	Art Unit 3727	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 April 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claims 1 and 3-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The structure set forth in claim 1 contradicts the disclosure at page 7, lines 8-18. The specification sets forth the closure device as two rings **30, 50** joined together by a bonding arrangement with elastic bands **40** extending across the opening of the rings and a sleeve **60** folded over the elastic bands, the sleeve acting as a closure member. However, the claims set forth the elastic members as surrounding the closure member. Since the sleeve is the closure member it cannot be surrounded by the elastic bands as set forth in the claims. This is a NEW MATTER rejection.

2. Claims 1 and 3-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The structure of the claims is not clearly set forth. What is the closure member? and how do the elastic bands surround it? It appears applicant is setting forth the small opening formed by the sleeve covered elastic bands as the closure member which is inconsistent with the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

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4. Claims 1,3 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones (US 2,685,981).

Jones teaches a closure device 2, closure mechanism 9, peripheral support structure 3, and a closure member as the central opening formed by crossing the deformable structures across one another. Wherein the wire members of the closure device are not considered elastically deformable, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use an elastic band, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

5. Claims 1,3, and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karesh (US 4,078,686) in view of Jones.

Karesh teaches a plastic container having a closure device at each end.

Jones teaches it is known to provide a closure having a deformable opening and closing mechanism. Wherein the wire members of the closure device are not considered elastically deformable, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use an elastic band, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to substitute the closures of Karesh with the closure of Jones. Doing so would allow for opening and automatic reclose of the container without removal of the closure device.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 4-11 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, first and second paragraphs, set forth in this Office action.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed April 6, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding applicant's remarks addressing the new matter issue, applicant's explanation of the structure of the closure device is not sufficient to support the language of the claims. As stated above, since the sleeve is the closure member and is folded over the elastic bands, it cannot be surrounded by the elastic bands. In fact the opposite is true wherein the closure member surrounds the elastic bands.

Regarding the elastically deformable bands of Jones, in a state of rest, i.e., prior to insertion of mechanism 14, the bands are not under external stress and the opening, as seen in figure 5, is closed. It is upon insertion of mechanism 14 that the bands are under external stress and the opening is opened. Because the bands allow for insertion of the mechanism 14 to hold it in the central opening, they are elastically deformable.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., the elastic bands allow the opening formed at the center of the folded sleeve to reclose) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Mirus teaches a closure device openable in the plane of the closure.

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

10. In order to reduce pendency and avoid potential delays, Group 3720 is encouraging FAXing of responses to Office Actions directly into the Group at (703) 872-9306. This practice may be used for filing papers not requiring a fee. It may also be used for filing papers which require a fee by applicants who authorize charges to a PTO deposit account. Please identify the examiner and art unit at the top of your cover sheet. Papers submitted via FAX into Group 3720 will be promptly forwarded to the examiner.

11. It is called to applicant's attention that if a communication is faxed before the reply time has expired, applicant may submit the reply with a "Certificate of Facsimile" which merely asserts that the reply is being faxed on a given date. So faxed, before the period for reply has expired, the reply may be considered timely. A suggested format for a certificate follows:

I hereby certify that this correspondence for Application Serial No. _____ is being facsimiled to The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via fax number (703) 872-7306 on the date shown below:

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate

Signature _____

Date _____

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12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robin Hylton whose telephone number is (703) 308-1208. The examiner works a flexible schedule, but can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lee Young, can be reached on (703) 308-2572.

If in receiving this Office Action it is apparent to applicant that certain documents are missing, e.g., copies of references cited, form PTO-1449, form PTO-892, etc., requests for copies of such papers should be directed to Technology Center 3700 Customer Service Office at (703) 306-5648.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

RAH
June 22, 2004



Robin A. Hylton
Primary Examiner
GAU 3727